WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method for allocating virtual machines among clients on a network, comprising the steps of:

    (a)   providing one or more host servers, each host server having a plurality of virtual machines available for allocation;

    (b)   receiving client requests for allocation of virtual machines; and

    (c)   assigning virtual machines to clients, the virtual machines being distributed among the host servers according to a load-balancing algorithm.

2.   The method of claim 1 wherein the step of receiving client requests further includes receiving the requests at a single IP address.

3.   The method of claim 2 wherein the step of assigning virtual machines further includes assigning each virtual machine to only one client.

4.   The method of claim 3, and further comprising the step of associating each client with a unique session identifier.

5.   The method of claim 4, and further comprising the step of maintaining client access to its assigned virtual machines for the duration of the session.

6.   The method of claim 5, and further comprising the step of monitoring the network for receipt of data from additional clients.

7.   The method of claim 6, wherein the step of assigning virtual machines to clients further includes copying a virtual machine file to a memory location assigned to a specific client.

8.   A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having control logic stored therein and residing on a server to permit allocating virtual machines among clients on a network, said control logic comprising:

     (a)   computer readable program code means for providing two or more host servers, each host server having a plurality of virtual machines available for allocation;

     (b)   computer readable program code means for receiving client requests for allocation of virtual machines; and

     (c)   computer readable program code means for assigning virtual machines to clients, the virtual machines being distributed among the host servers according to a load-balancing algorithm.

9.   The computer program product of claim 8, wherein the means for receiving client requests further includes means for receiving the requests at a single IP address.

10. The computer program product of claim 9, and further comprising means for associating each client with a unique session identifier.

11. The computer program product of claim 10, and further comprising means for maintaining client access to its assigned virtual machines for the duration of the session.

12. The computer program product of claim 11, and further comprising means for monitoring the network for receipt of data from additional clients

13. The computer program product of claim 12, wherein the means for assigning virtual machines to clients further includes means for copying a virtual machine file to a memory location assigned to a specific client.

14. A system for allocating virtual machines among clients on a network, comprising:

   (a)   a plurality of client computers connected to the network;

   (b)   one or more host servers, each server having a plurality of virtual machines available for allocation; and

   (c)   a processor connecting the network and the host servers, said processor including

    (i)   a port for receiving client requests for allocation of virtual

machines and for providing connectivity between clients and

allocated virtual machines,

    (ii)   an output connected to the host servers, and

5   (iii)   means for distributing the allocated virtual machines among

the host servers according to a load-balancing algorithm.

15.   The system of claim 14, wherein the server computer includes a directory

containing a copy of the virtual machines that have been assigned to the

client computer.

10   16.   The system of claim 14, wherein the server computer includes a plurality of

directories, each directory containing a copy of the virtual machines that

have been assigned to a client computer and each client computer having

access only to that directory.